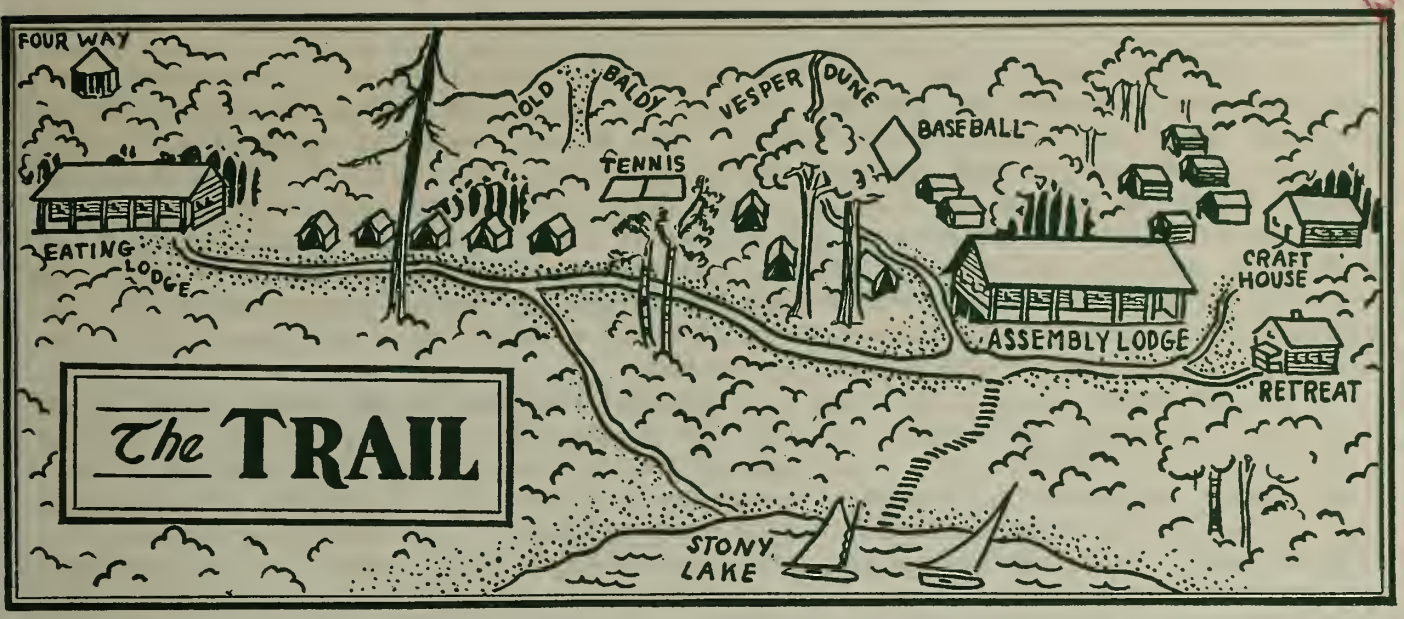

The TRAIL

Official Newsletter of the Miniwanca Younger Boys and Pre-Senior Camps

AMERICAN YOUTH FOUNDATION, 3930 Lindell Boulevard, St. Louis 8, Mo.

OCTOBER 1956

HI GANG! The fall of the year with its brisk, bright days, its colors of red and brown and orange and bronze and yellow, and its call to come again to the woods and the waters before the mantle of winter closes about the whole of the out-of-doors, turns our minds once again to the out-of-doors, and inevitably to the fellowship we found together in the midst of God's created beauty on the shores of Lake Michigan and Stony Lake at Camp Miniwanca. I'll just bet each one of you sits and dreams sometimes at your desk in school or over your studies at home, about the sparkling waters and the softly shadowed dunes of Miniwanca. Don't dream too much,though. That school work is important, and is the one big job which stands in front of you right now. Give it the very best that you've got.

THIS ISSUE OF THE TRAIL is brought to you as a reminder of many of last summer's experiences,and as an invitation to return for more thrilling adventure at Miniwanca next summer. First, about next year. Months ago we accepted the very last new applicants for next summer that we can possibly accept, until we hear how many of you old campers will be coming back. We are saving 120 places in the camp enrolment up until December 1st for old campers. After that, any places that are left will be thrown open to the fellows who are standing by on our long waiting list.If you want a place in camp, by all means have your parents mail your registration card right away. We want to give every one of you first crack at coming back,and we don't want any of you to lose out because the matter has been put off until too late.

MANY MINIWANCA SCENES COME BACK TO MIND as I reflect on those grand five weeks we had together last summer. Just to live through a regular camp day was a thrill.Even the few of you fellows who thought that morning set-ups were a disagreeable chore, can look back now and realize what a swell experience they were, getting the old body in shape for a full day of vigorous and happy activity. Following set-ups, a hearty breakfast prepared by Ruthie Steiner and her fine crew, and those brief but penetrating morning devotions given by our YB Leaders really gave us a set-up for the entire day.

As you look back on camp, you realize that it helped you build some habits that were very much worthwhile. Getting reading for inspection, cleaning and tidying up, watching after your physical well being, trips to our wonderful nurse, NINA EVERDING, to care for those cuts and bruises, the co-operative work together within the cabin to get ready for inspection - all of these things are habits well worth learning. Then the remainder of the morning given over to learning skills in swimming and in particular hobbies and interest groups, and also to learning of the lives and thoughts of worthwhile Christian leaders through our Christian Ideals' classes, made our five weeks really worthwhile in making us stretch and grow in our minds, our spirits, our bodies, and our relationships with one another.

The afternoon was a great time with rousing competition in tribal games. So was the fun of swimming and diving, sailing and rowing and canoeing, hiking and playing games with good warm friends. The peak of the day was Vesper time, when at some time during the course of the camp, everyone of those fine YB Leaders gave something real from his own heart and mind to guide our thinking. The inspiring times up on Vesper Dune, looking at the sunset over Lake Michigan, will remain in the memories of all of us throughout the years of our lives ahead. And then, to cap off the day with some surprise event, some special fun activity like Night's Doings - this was a swell last period to a full and wonderful day.

Such a full day brought tiredness, and made rest a pleasure, as well as a necessity. When the sound of Taps and some beautiful and familiar hymn rang forth over the dunes from Speedy Evans' trumpet, we knew another great day of our lives had come to a wonderful end.

SPECIAL EVENTS were a real part of the summer at Miniwanca, and helped to give freshness and newness to all that we did. Let's look at some of those special events, and remember what a great time we had with everyone taking part, and everyone giving the very best he had to make them worthwhile. There were those grand Friendly Councils on Sunday evening, with so many fellows taking part to share their talents with all the rest of us. Who can forget the team that somehow always seemed to show up when Hillbilly Clay and Farmer Crawley rose once more to sing the praise of West Virginia! Remember the Low Councils with the special stunts and acts put on for entertainment, and to represent the tribes in competition. There really were some swell new acts in Low Council this past summer - some that hadn't shown up there before. This reminds me to say, get the old noggin busy thinking up some new ones for next summer.

The Fourth of July came along, and John Mothershead and his committee put on a rip-roaring day for us. Even if it did have to be postponed until the Fifth! The parade was one of the best we've ever had, and the sand modeling was particularly outstanding. And who'll ever forget Speedy Evans riding the greased pole with his clothes on?

Miniwanca Square Gardens brought its usual thrills and excitement, together with some really well-matched events, under Kenny Woodruff's direction. Ace Givens showed promise of being a real promoter some day. You'll have to help organize the event next summer, Randy.

Remember how the rain was with us all summer! If it wasn't there, at least it was just around the next cloud waiting to arrive. And yet, it wasn't a real problem, was it? Everyone rose to meet the necessary shifts in program with real enthusiasm. It just goes to show you what a gang of really swell fellows can do when they have given themselves to a grand program, and will not be downed, no matter what the weather. We were able to go through with our Athletic Meet, Aquatic Meet, Regattas, County Fair Day, and many other special events, even though the rain threatened continually to interfere. These swell days and fine programs were possible, simply because everybody kept giving his best. Mention of the Aquatic Meet reminds us that more individual records fell in that Meet this year than in any Meet, either Aquatic or Athletic, in many, many years. Our focus, however, is not to make individual

stars, but to give everyone opportunity to compete against himself, and these meets sure gave every one of you that opportunity.

There were those beach suppers with grand fellowship around the fire and the opportunity to cook our food and get close to one another under the bright stars above. The hike day was a big one, wasn't it? I'm sure the high moment to everyone was when the food truck had come into sight, been unloaded, and those griddle cakes had just been turned off the fire for breakfast. You Darers had a great time around the dunes and on the beach area, exploring, playing games, and hiking about. The Marshville Dam trip by you Doers is a hike with long tradition behind it. It has for years been one of the favorite hiking points. That Pre-Senior hike to the Little Point Sable area and up near Silver Lake continues to be one of the real high points of the whole summer. The hike along the beach is one of the "tops" in thrilling experiences, interesting things to see, and the opportunity to look over the vast expanse of lake and sky, and feel stirring within one the wide, wide thoughts which viewing God's creation brings.

Mike Hudson and his gang put on a swell Leaders' Frolic this year. It was lively and witty, and a lot of good fun for everybody. The mention of special events would not be complete without mentioning the two presentations of the Dramatics interest group this summer. Remember what a swell job those guys did under tremendous handicap. First they weren't able to get their scripts, so they could learn their parts, and then they had difficulty getting time to work on scenery and props, because of the press of many other activities and responsibilities. And yet, particularly on that last play, they designed and built the finest stage set that Camp Miniwanca Younger Boys Camp has ever seen, and they did a remarkably fine job in presenting their plays. A letter from Bob Neubauer the other day says he'll be back next summer, and is already picking out some plays. No chance of coming up short on parts next year.

Sundays were special days at camp, and I know we all enjoyed them. It was always especially inspiring to go up on Chapel Dune and sit in our outdoor cathedral, looking out over the rough stone altar, through the window of the trees, over the vista of the woods and lake, and to hear those fine speakers who stood before us. Especially appreciated was the day when campers spoke in our church service - Jack Brandt, Jerry Hazlewood, John Blakemore and Al Abrams, showed they really had caught the spirit of Miniwanca, and they inspired us all as they passed that spirit on again to us. Sunday afternoons, with a great playtime on the beach (when the weather man didn't object) and the opportunity to explore the acres and acres of wooded dunes on our Miniwanca camp site, was a grand time for everybody. And of course we've already mentioned Friendly Councils, which made Sunday night such an enjoyable time.

ONE CAN'T MENTION SPECIAL EVENTS, however, and then mention THE special event even in the same breath, for THE special event of the summer was the Political Convention. Nothing like the job that was done on that has been seen on the grounds of Miniwanca for many a year. It seemed like every camper and leader sensed the significance of this activity, realized what he could learn from it about our nation's life and the workings of our democratic procedure, and threw himself into the working out of the Convention program like nothing else that was done all summer. Through the caucuses, the state delegation groups, the speeches, the nominations, and secondings, the parades and demonstrations, the Convention procedure, and even the work of the sergeant at arms, we learned in a very real way how this phase of our national political life is carried on. Hats off to Don Stoner and his terrific committee, under Ed Clark's able guidance, who worked out the countless details which were necessary to making our political convention such a rousing success.

I tell you fellows, it was a tremendous summer! One that will be with you in memory for the rest of your life, and more important, one that will greatly influence your attitudes and decisions throughout the rest of your life, because of the

really worthwhile emphasis on Christian character, which was carried out through it all.

WHILE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES, I want to put in a word or two about next year. Right now we're going through some planning for next summer, and would welcome any suggestions that you fellows have to make. If you've got a good idea of what could be added to the camp's activities to make it even more interesting and challenging, sit right down and write a letter to the office, letting me know what you suggest. I can't guarantee we'll follow every one of your suggestions, but I can guarantee we'll give them really serious consideration, and follow the ones that we can work out by next summer. We're talking about the possibility of a not too distant but super-special canoe jaunt for some of our Pre-Seniors. This at least is a possibility. We're giving some very real thought to having the Pre-Seniors, and perhaps on occasion a few of the Doers, move out more into the out-of-doors, and really take an extended outing trip. How about that, Pre-Seniors? Pack up your victuals in your knapsack, and hike, hike, hike! We're giving some thought to possible new hiking spots, in addition to the ones we have already used in the past. There also is some discussion of possibly making extended overnights for some of the cabin groups and some of the tribal groups who found that time on the beach for overnights was far too limited last year. These cabin group times are great. We want to make the most of them that we possibly can next summer. Believe me, we want your suggestions, so sit right down and write.

A FEW LETTERS HAVE BEGUN TO COME IN FROM LAST YEAR'S LEADERS. They're just now getting around to being able to write after getting over the busiest part of starting in school this fall. "Teddy Bear" Beatty is back at Central Michigan again this year, and already is hoping to come to Miniwanca next summer. Bob Neubauer, as I've already mentioned, is looking forward to camp next summer. He was recently elected President of the Student Council in his college group. Congratulations, Bob! Bob Smidt is back at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and has recently written, telling how much his summer at Miniwanca has meant to him. You meant a lot to us, too, Bob. Come and do it again! Letters from Don Stoner and Louie Booth indicate that both of them are in seminary this year - Don for his first year, and Louie for his second. They are at different schools, but both are in the Chicago area. Our best to both of these theologs. John Mothershead writes that he is back at the University of Texas doing graduate work, and is working on a waterfront program as his thesis for his Masters Degree. Jim Hearne has recently written from M.I.T., and sent us one of the best sets of suggestions regarding next year's camp that we have received from anyone. Our thanks to you, Jim. I hope we can really profit by your fine thinking on this subject. Don Stoner shares with you in making some very helpful suggestions with regard to next summer's camp. We'd like to hear from all of the rest of the leaders, and from the campers, too.

JUST THIS WORD TO LEADERS - we are anxious to have a good representation of the 1956 leader staff back for 1957. Any camp is only as good as the quality of its leaders. Your experience last summer will stand you in good stead to do an exceptionally superior job in 1957. Write and let me know you'll count on doing it. And by the way, you know the kind of leaders we want for YB Camp. We're anxious to keep upgrading the standards of our leadership. As you leaders look around you among your college mates, we invite you to tag some guy who measures up to our YB leader standards, and enlist him for next summer's leadership. We'll be glad to work with you on it if you'll simply put us in touch with quality fellows whom you can wholeheartedly recommend.

SEVERAL CAMPERS AND LEADERS WERE QUITE GENEROUS LAST YEAR IN SHARING WITH THE CAMP LIBRARY some of the books that they no longer had use for at home. We invite all

of you to look over your personal books, and if you find some which are appealing to boys and worthwhile reading, but which you no longer need to keep in your library, we would be pleased to have you share them with the camp. Simply box them up and send them to Camp Miniwanca. Don Pierce will be on hand all winter, will receive them, and will have them ready for use in the Blazer Library next summer. The family of Mr. William H. Danforth - "Minisino", recently presented the camp with a number of very fine books from his library. It will be good to have his books and yours side by side, serving boys who attend Camp Miniwanca throughout the years to come.

REMEMBER YOUR "MINIWANCA CHATS"? During the next few weeks we will be sending to each of you old campers a letter from the leader with whom you talked. In it you will find his suggestions, based on his chats with you, to aid you in continuing this year to grow in the Fourfold Way. - Be on the lookout for this important and helpful letter.

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WADJEPI, JOE WHITWAM, AILEEN GIVENS, CHARLIE PAUCK, ED CLARK, KODAYA, NINA EVERDING - all join me in sending you the very best wishes from our senior staff at camp this summer. I hope it will be possible for every one of us to be together again as the Miniwanca season rolls around.

Founderly yours,

Bob Steiger

Bob Steiger
Associate Director
The American Youth Foundation

In this issue you will find the roster of senior staff, leaders' staff, and campers for the 1956 Younger Boys Camp at Miniwanca. I'm sure you've been wishing for this list. Now with the names and addresses, you can get off your Christmas greetings in a short while, and friendly notes throughout the year. If you have corrections to make in our address list, please write and give us the accurate information. (Leaders, we'd like a correct college address from each of you; please check after your name and let us know of any additions or alterations.)

Several of you have expressed an interest, both during camp and since camp, in having a short summary of the sermon Bob gave the first Sunday in camp up on Chapel Dune. Someone made a summary and passed it on to the Foundation office. We reprint it on the following page as a reminder to you of Bob's words. Perhaps you will also find in it a helpful idea or two to use in your own youth discussions.

FOUR THINGS MY FATHER TAUGHT ME -

1. A dull axe is a lot more dangerous than a sharp one. It just won't do the job it is made to do. A sharp one will cut right in. My Dad would apply that to a lot of other things; a dull mind is a lot more dangerous than a sharp mind. The guy who doesn't take the trouble to sharpen his mind is a threat to society. He is not taking care of the tools that can make him the effective person he could be.

2. Never go swimming alone. There is a good reason for it. It applies anywhere, no matter where you are and no matter how well able you are to take care of yourself; you never know what might happen. We depend upon each other to stand by and give us aid when we need it. This is true in other areas besides the water. There are many people who think they can be completely independent. There are a lot of "let me go my way" people. To every one of us in life, there comes a time when we need each other very much. We cannot grow to be the kind of people God created us to be without other people. Take a buddy along - make friends - and be a dependable friend.

3. Never stand in front of an empty gun. You read about it all the time - it was empty, but somehow the gun goes off anyway and blows somebody to kingdom come. I have come to conclude my Dad was rightly cautious. This applies to many things - our behavior - our companions - our habits. Some people think it makes little difference about companions, attitudes, opinions. One fellow says, "I can still be what I want to be no matter what I do or who I am with". But one day he will wake up to realize that the kind of companions he has had prove to be a loaded gun, and they have gone off in his face. - - If not outside ourselves, the trouble will be inside us. You will face this problem increasingly. The use of alcohol is one of these things. So are one's language, one's thoughts and actions toward the opposite sex, and one's habits of work. The tragedy so many times is that though one thinks it to be harmless, a fellow will find the gun is loaded, and he is shot dead center with it. The smart guy, the wise one, never lets the barrel turn his direction, he turns aside.

4. Never go into the woods without a guide. After much planning, my Dad and I took a trip to the woods. This is a lesson we both learned together. It took a while to get out again! That, too, is a good lesson to apply to many other areas. As you are growing older and taking more responsibility, don't go out into the woods of life without a guide. The one I would commend to you is God the Father of us all, who stands always ready to show us the way if we will only look...always ready to give us words of guidance if we will only listen.

An examination of these four lessons from my father will show you their importance to our Four-Fold, balanced living. The mental, social, physical, and religious sides of life require our intelligent concern and our forthright action in each area if our lives are to grow in the wholesome way that God intends.

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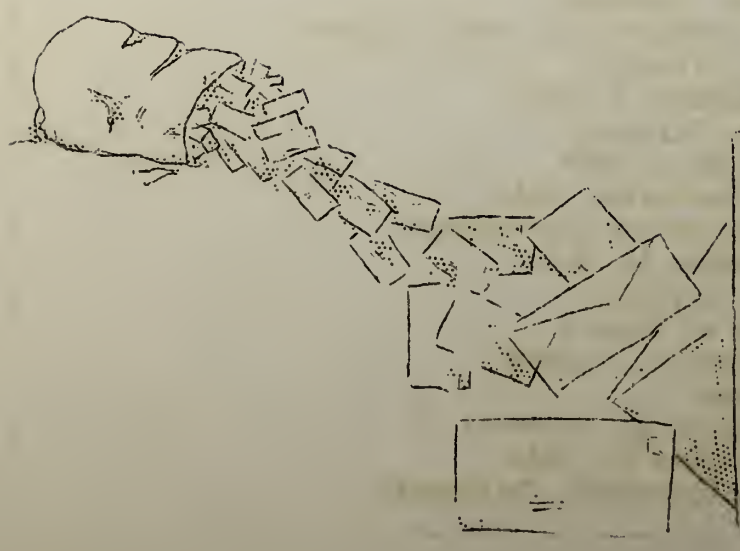

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